

Israel tears down homes in Jerusalem as settlements grow

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel is using helicopters, aerial photos and bulldozers to stop Palestinians building in East Jerusalem while it steams ahead with constructing homes for Jewish settlers in the annexed part of the Holy City.

A special department in the Interior Ministry with an equivalent in the Jerusalem city hall have been put in charge of keeping tabs on any building work undertaken by Palestinians in the Holy City.

"Teams of inspectors patrol the Arab part of Jerusalem taking photos of apartment blocks, factories and sheds," Anat Hoffman, a member of the left-wing Meretz Party in the Jerusalem council, told AFP.

She said the interior ministry also used a helicopter which took aerial photos.

"The images are then regrouped and experts compare them from year to year to detect illegal construction," she said.

If the authorities deem regulations have been abused, then a destruction order is issued, and could be carried out within 72 hours, said lawyer Linda Bryer.

The head of the ministry's department is Sion Saad, whom Ms. Hoffman denounced as a "cowboy" who is convinced all the homes of the 100,000 Arabs in East Jerusalem should be destroyed.

"His activities have intensified since the signing of the Oslo accords," which led to the launch of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho last May, Ms. Hoffman added.

Under the 1993 declaration of principles on autonomy, the status of Jerusalem is not due to be negotiated until 1996.

U.S. aide cites six areas to watch in peace process

WASHINGTON (USIA) — In the halls of government, only considered the art of the probable while policy is seen as the art of the possible.

In other words, says a seasoned State Department official, good policy rests on good analysis which, in turn, rests on good intelligence.

Daniel Kurtzer, the principal deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, provided an insight into the workings of an intelligence officer in a rare, candid, and on-the-record presentation Feb. 16 at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Until 10 days ago, Mr. Kurtzer served as deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs with special responsibility for Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The forum was shared by two of his counterparts from the National Security Council at the White House and the Defense Department. Senior government officials and former officials, including ex-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, and several ambassadors from the Middle East as well as European diplomats attended the session, which was titled "Intelligence and the Middle East: What do we need to know?"

From the White House came Ellen Laipson, who is the director for Near East and South Asian affairs and

Daud Abasi, a father of five, learnt to his cost of the ministry's efficiency.

Last year he was told by the city hall to build and pay for a small wall around the garden of his north Jerusalem home after a child fell down a ravine bordering it.

But Mr. Saad spotted it from his helicopter and the wall was destroyed. Ms. Hoffman said, waving the file in her hand.

Nabil Solokrot was another casualty of the regulations when he poured concrete in front of his door to stop mud flooding into his home when it rained.

The concrete block was seen and ordered to be demolished.

Ms. Hoffman said Mr. Saad, not taking any risks, personally intervened with dozens of border-guards and a bulldozer to destroy the block. Mr. Solokrot was also left with a \$1,400 fine.

"The demolition of houses and foundations of other structures often resembles a military operation," said Mr. Bryer, who with a group of lawyers has taken on dozens of complaints from Arab residents of Jerusalem.

An interior ministry spokesman told AFP that Mr. Saad did not give interviews to the press.

In stark contrast to the rules applied to Arabs, Jewish settlements are springing up on the "annexed" land.

But since 1967 Israel has not built a single apartment for Arabs," said Sarah Kaminker, a town planner and director of the Jewish-Arab Information Centre in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, about 65,700 homes for Israelis are being built within the limits of "greater" Jerusalem, she added.

Cetin heads new party

ANKARA (AFP) — Former Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin of the co-ruling People's Social Democratic Party (SHP) was elected leader Saturday of a new centrist party, in a move that could shatter Premier Tansu Ciller's coalition.

The new party has been formed by a merger with the People's Republican Party (CHP), which is in opposition.

Delegates of the two parties, meeting in Ankara to agree the details, were later to decide which party will accept dissolution in the other's favour.

In theory, the two will merge under the banner of the CHP. If that happens, Ms. Ciller's coalition with the SHP would be in doubt, as some constitutional experts believe it would be impossible for her to carry on a partnership with a new party drawn in part from the other.

Other experts said the decision rested with Mr. Cetin, 58, who is a broadly-respected pacifist and experienced diplomat of Kurdish origin.

Mr. Cetin, an SHP member, was the unopposed compromise candidate. The leaders of the two constituent parties, Foreign Minister Murat Karayalcin of the SHP and Deniz Baykal of the CHP had both refused to make way for the other as leader.

Mr. Cetin has defined his major political aim as the creation of a unified and strong centre left in Turkish politics.

He was replaced as foreign minister last July by Mumtaz Soysal, a fellow SHP deputy, who himself stepped down in November in favour of Mr. Karayalcin.



TENSION: Somali women and men surround a Pakistan U.N. soldier who guards the entrance of Mogadishu airport. The UNOSOM leaves Somalia by the first week of March under the protection of the U.S.-lead Operation Shield. The U.S. soldiers are reported to be equipped with experimental crowd-control weapons (AFP photo)

Princess pays tribute to industrial sector's contributions to the needy

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma on Sunday expressed appreciation of the Jordanian industrial sector for its continued backing for the Rama- dan charity campaign and businessmen's contributions to the needy.

Speaking at an iftar hosted in her honour by the industrial sector and the Jordanian business community, the Princess said that their contributions highlighted the fact that social solidarity was a permanent feature of the Jordanian society.

The contributions collected through the annual campaign have been benefiting scores of needy families who

received financial and in-kind assistance and grants to start income generating projects. she said.

The Amman Chamber of Industry president and Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) Chairman Hamdi Taban delivered addresses, stressing their determination to back the campaigns, which are spearheaded by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF).

Bashir to head QAF

Princess Basma on Sunday announced the appointment of Awni Al Bashir, a former minister and member of Par-

liament, as QAF executive director.

The Princess received Dr. Bashir in her office and said she was confident that his appointment would further boost the QAF activities and achieve its objectives.

Dr. Bashir expressed his delight at the appointment and pledged that he would do his best to serve the local community benefiting from his past experience as minister of social development.

Dr. Bashir was elected as member of Parliament for the Baqqa district in the 1989 elections and was appointed minister of social development in June 1991.

Jenin rejects limited self-rule, but wary of full autonomy

JENIN, Occupied West Bank (AFP) — The mayor and residents in this bustling West Bank town say an Israeli offer of autonomy without a troop withdrawal would make little difference to them.

And many doubt their lives would get much better if and when full Palestinian self-rule comes to Jenin.

Abdullah Lahlah, whom Israel appointed mayor of Jenin 10 years ago, dismissed the offer as "nothing more than we already have" for the 28,000 residents of this town set among green hills, olive groves and almond trees.

"This is completely out of the question. It's just a waste of time," Mr. Lahlah said.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin proposed the "Jenin-first" option at a summit Thursday with Yasir Arafat aimed at defusing tension over the delay in spreading Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank.

Mr. Arafat and senior Palestinian officials have turned down the offer for some municipal and economic freedom, and Mr. Rabin confessed the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief was not enthusiastic, but left the plan on the table anyway.

"In any case, we control more than 99 per cent of daily life here, as well as economic life," Mr. Lahlah said. "What we need is military deployment and elections on all of the West Bank."

Israel turned over education, health, taxation, tourism and social affairs on the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority three months ago.

The move did not dramatically alter people's lives as Palestinians initially ran these departments under Israeli officials.

"When Arafat comes here, we will go back to using oil tanks," he said.

But all looked forward to the strongest evidence of Palestinian power that Mr. Arafat would bring: An armed police force in uniform like those in Gaza and Jericho.

"The most important thing for us here is security," said Emad Al Sayess, a hairdresser from the nearby Jenin refugee camp of 11,000.

"Otherwise what would we have gained, it's all for nothing. If we don't have our police, it's useless."

Israeli group slams conditions of lock-up for Palestinians

The Jerusalem Post

SMALL four-bed cells sometimes house up to 50 Palestinians being held for illegally entering Israel, according to a report on Jerusalem's Russian Compound lock-up by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

In a written reply to the report, Ben-Yair also said: "There were several objective points that can't be improved because of the character of the building."

He was referring to the fact that the present complex is located in a British Mandate era building protected by historic preservation codes.

ACRI maintains this is a major reason the lockup must be moved.

Foreign workers in Israel top 70,000

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has imported 59,000 cheap foreign labourers to replace Palestinians and another 11,000 are being recruited, Labour Minister Ora Namir said Sunday. She presented the figure at the weekly cabinet meeting as Israel eased a month-long closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing 900 Palestinians to return to work

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:15 ... Khartoum (SD)
07:25 ... Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
12:35 ... Paris, Dakar (AF)
14:00 ... Hodidah (TV)
14:30 ... Kiev (SU)
17:45 ... Paris, Rome (AF)
18:15 ... Paris, Dakar (AF)
23:10 ... Dubai (EX)
23:10 ... London (BA)
01:00 ... Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights (Terminal 1)

05:45 ... Beirut (RJ)
07:00 ... Aqaba (RJ)
10:45 ... Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30 ... Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:45 ... Cairo (RJ)
13:45 ... Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 ... Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:00 ... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:25 ... Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:00 ... Istanbul (TK)
06:15 ... Beirut (ME)
10:30 ... Cairo (MS)
12:00 ... Casablanca, Tunis (TU)
13:30 ... Khartoum (SD)

08:30 ... Sanaa (SU)
09:45 ... Djeddah (SU)
09:45 ... Ankara (SU)
09:45 ... Aqaba (RJ)
09:45 ... New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 ... Beirut (RJ)
09:55 ... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 ... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fls per kg.

Apple 700/400

Carrot 620

Carrot 130/60

Cauliflower 140/80

Cucumbers (large) 200/120

Cucumbers (small) 360/280

Eggplant 200/120

Garlic 1000/600

Grape Fruits 280/200

Leek 280/200

Marrow (large) 200/100

Marrow (small) 350/200

Onion (green) 300/200

Onion (dry) 200/100

Orange 600/400

Pepper (hot) 1000/800

Pepper (sweet) 500/300

Potato 350/250

Radicchio 180/100

Spinach 120/60

String Beans 900/700

Tomato 280/180

Turnip 200/100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06) 222-7000, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

08:30 ... Sanaa (SU)
08:45 ... Djeddah (SU)

09:45 ... Ankara (SU)

09:45 ... Aqaba (RJ)

09:45 ... New Delhi (RJ)

09:55 ... Beirut (RJ)

09:55 ... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:00 ... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

House discusses unemployment, TCC privatisation and Aqaba projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament met Sunday and heard from deputies on the problem of unemployment, plans for privatising the Telecommunications Corporation, and Aqaba port projects among other issues. The deputies also listened to replies by ministers on queries previously presented to them by Lower House members.

Deputy Abdullah Aku Isheidat voiced his dismay over the rising rate of unemployment and what he called futile measures undertaken to deal with the problem.

The deputy suggested that the government cut JD 3 million from this year's fiscal budget to be allocated for projects that would create jobs.

He said that JD 1 million could go to the Ministry of Public Works to finance the employment of daily wage-earners working on the ministry's projects; another JD 1 million for the Ministry of Agriculture to finance afforestation projects that employ as many workers as possible, and JD 1 million to pay daily wage-earners working for the Department of Antiquities on excavations

and the restoration of archaeological sites.

Deputy Ahmad Qudah questioned the wisdom behind the government's intention to convert the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) into a private company.

The deputy asked whether the TCC was no longer able to handle its services to the public, and whether the private sector was more efficient in operating the corporation.

The TCC, he added, is one of the most successful government agencies, providing the state treasury stands to lose a steady income at a time when the country resorts to borrowing to meet its obligations.

"I do not think that the private sector would be more competent in handling the corporation's affairs and in offering better service," added the deputy, who said there was not a single reason that justifies the transformation.

Mr. Qudah demanded that the government cancel plans for privatising the TCC in a bid to protect citizens' interests and those of the nation.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker replied to a query by Deputy Nazih Ammar concerning the criteria for the appointment of advisors to the government.

Sharif Zeid said that the criteria follows the same patterns of appointing other civil servants in other departments.

Ahmad Kasasbeh enquired about the Ports Corporation's plans for building a passenger platform and its benefits to the Aqaba harbour.

In reply, Transport Minister Samir Kawar said that the wharf was being built in implementation of a Cabinet decision upon the recommendation of a Japanese technical team which approved the feasibility study for the new projects.

The minister said that the platform was needed in view of the increase in the number of passengers travelling between Aqaba and Nweibeh, Egypt, noting that in 1994 668,038 passengers were ferried to Nweibeh. Earnings from their transport totalled JD 958,039.

Locusts swarm northern S. Arabia Ministry says it is prepared for emergency

AMMAN (J.T.) — Swarms of desert locusts have invaded parts of northern Saudi Arabia, and there is a possibility that the vegetation-destroying insects could migrate to Jordan. Agriculture Minister Ben Tarif announced Sunday.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the minister said that the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Middle East have notified Jordan that parts of Tabuk in the northern Arabian peninsula have been invaded by locusts and they warned of the possibility of their movement into Jordan.

Mr. Ben Tarif said that

operations were under way to fight off the pests in Saudi Arabia, and current weather conditions in Jordan make the danger a remote possibility at present.

He said that the Agriculture Ministry here has taken measures to combat the desert locusts in the event they appear in Jordanian territory.

The ministry, in cooperation with the Armed Forces and the Air Force, has made plans for aerial spraying of areas that could be a target of the locusts, and it has sufficient trained manpower to do the job as well as teams to monitor the southeastern regions near the borders with Saudi Arabia, Mr. Ben Tarif said.

According to Mazea Khasawneh, head of the ministry's department in charge of protecting farmlands, the Kingdom was last invaded by locusts in 1988 when effective measures dealt promptly with the situation.

Mr. Khasawneh said that the ministry has a central operations room ready to receive and relay information inside the Kingdom and with neighbouring states and international organisations.

"We are in constant contact with these parties and monitoring the situation very carefully," added Mr. Khasawneh who said that the Kingdom possesses sufficient equipment and pesticides needed for the emergency.

Agriculture ministry price-setting anger materials trade association

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A recent decision by the Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif to set the prices of agricultural inputs drew an angry response from the Agriculture Materials Trade Association which Sunday said it would protest to the prime minister.

According to Samer Maher, an agricultural engineer and a member representing the association, the merchants are facing new legislation regarding the retail pricing (end user price) for all imported agricultural supplies.

He said that in order to come up with the fixed retail prices, the Ministry of Agriculture stipulates a gross margin of eight per cent on the importers' landed cost of any such material thus forcing agriculture supply companies in Jordan to adhere to these fixed prices or face severe penalties.

According to Mr. Maher, the general assembly of the association continuously tried to contact the agriculture minister to discuss the new laws and measures but "the minister was never available at all the times we tried to

contact him."

"The minister of agriculture has shown a lack of response regarding a request by our association for an audience to discuss with him the ill effects of his decision to set the prices of agricultural materials," Mr. Maher said.

Mr. Maher told the Jordan Times that this regrettable decision is viewed to be in conflict with the "revered directions of His Majesty King Hussein and the instructions of the rightly-guided government that calls for the liberalisation of the private sector in order to concur with a market-oriented economy and ultimately shoulder more responsibility in agriculture economic development."

He warned that this decision will put an end to all such imports and will destroy the entire agriculture supply sector.

"This intransigence leaves no room for a market-oriented economy and is in conflict with the existing agriculture produce-marketing chain and it destroys the livelihood of all those working directly in this sector," Mr. Maher said.

In addition, he said, the decision will increase unemployment and also kill the

free entrepreneurial spirit which has been the backbone of the development and advancement of the agriculture sector.

"The minister's decision is personal and was not based on any scientific study that will take into consideration all the concerned parties," he said.

According to Mr. Maher, the services and products offered by the agricultural materials companies include, technology transfer, technical assistance to the farmer, advanced products, extension services, farm credit and others.

"The cost of such services and products is proportionately small in terms of total production cost. Yet their value of agricultural production far exceeds the small proportion they represent," he said.

The Minister of Agriculture was not available all day Saturday and Sunday to comment on the issue.

The under-secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, who was contacted Sunday, evening, refused to comment on the issue and said that "this issue only concerns the minister, and I can't comment on it."

Jordan, Sudan sign maritime agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Sudan Sunday signed an agreement on maritime transport, trade and cooperation between their ports.

A statement following the signing ceremony said that the two sides agreed on facilitating and organising maritime transport between their respective ports, the use of seaports and fleets and exchange of expertise designed to serve the interests of the people of the two countries.

The minister said that meetings this week had met all objectives set prior to his arrival in the Kingdom. "This will be seen leading to increased bilateral

integration between the national commercial fleets and launching cooperation in trade and maritime transport, according to the agreement signed by Minister of Transport Samir Kawar and Sudan's ambassador to Jordan, Abdul Rahman Nuseir.

It said that the two sides will cooperate in guidance of vessels, rescue at sea and in the exchange of information on vessel safety.

They will also work together to remove obstacles impeding maritime transport

between Jordan and Sudan, coordinate laws and regulations concerning maritime trading between them, unify their positions at international and regional forums and collaborate in training cadres and in the maintenance of vessels.

Also in accordance with the agreement, the two sides agreed to create a joint shipping line, arrange for their respective seaports to transport goods and passengers, and encourage joint investment in projects pertaining to their joint maritime

enterprise and promote the services of their seaports.

The two sides agreed to set up a joint maritime committee grouping representatives from the two countries to ensure the implementation of the agreement and follow up on the exchange of information and statistical data.

Upon signing the agreement Mr. Kawar landed the excellent relations between the two countries, adding that the agreement was bound to boost the exchange of trade between Jordan and Sudan on the one hand and

between the two countries and other countries in the region on the other.

Mr. Kawar noted that Sudan possesses a good commercial fleet and expressed hope that Jordan would be able to participate in operating that fleet.

For his part, the Sudanese ambassador said that the agreement reflects the strong links between Sudan and Jordan and the endeavours of the leaderships in Amman and Khartoum to bolster inter-Arab trade and economic relations.

Austrian firm to study feasibility of proposed Jordan-Syria railroad

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Austrian company will conduct a pre-feasibility study on a proposed Jordan-Syria railroad that would be the first phase in the Kingdom's plans to eventually make railways one of the key means of transport within the region with links to Europe.

The present Jordanian-Syrian railroad is of narrow gauge and Jordan's plans involve converting it into the standard broad gauge and thus making it compatible with the European network that could eventually be linked with the region through Turkey and Syria.

Parts of the network will also be used in transport of Jordanian phosphate as well as potash to the port of Aqaba for Far Eastern destinations and to the Israeli port of Haifa for European importers.

Jordanian proposals presented at the Casablanca economic summit last year involve about 1,100 kilometres of railroad at an estimated cost of \$1.3 billion.

According to Ms. Ishaq, the union will start a hot line service within the next few weeks.

"There will be a round table of lawyers, health, psychology and social experts to receive women's calls and advise them," Ms. Ishaq said.

Financing for the project is expected to be discussed in an Amman conference to be held in October as a follow-up to the Casablanca summit, where ideas were presented for various parties for initial discussions.

The pre-feasibility study to be undertaken by Austria Rail Engineering, a private sector company, involves a section of the overall national project. This section will run between Amman and the Syrian border and will have a branch running from Mafraq to Irbid.

The project, rated as "high priority" in the Kingdom's plans, involves 124 kilometres of rails at an estimated cost of \$192 million and is expected to be completed in three years from the date of launching.

The Irbid branch of the railroad will be extended another 70 kilometres to the Jordanian-Israeli border near Al Majma Bridge, from where it could link up with an Israeli network that runs to the port of Haifa through Beit Shean.

As and when realised, the rail network will involve linkage among Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Israel passing through the Kingdom from north to south and east to west.

Under present plans, Mafraq will serve the key junction for the Irbid extension to the railroad run-

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

Taylor at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 7:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of oil paintings by Sabah Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 688701).

Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasna Kuyumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre. Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Centre.

"Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery. Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Lecture entitled "Nabataean Trade Routes and Cities in the Negev" by Jane

FILM

★ Film entitled "Peau De Banane" at the French Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

PLAY

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

LECTURE

★ Lecture entitled "Nabataean Trade Routes and Cities in the Negev" by Jane

Visiting Australian trade minister opens major regional trade office in Amman

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Australian Minister of Trade Bob McMullan Sunday rounded up his visit to Jordan with the inauguration of the Australian Trade Commission's (Austrade) regional Amman Branch. The office will be shared with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC), the national marketing body for Australian meat and livestock.

The new office will serve Syria, the occupied territories and Iraq as well as Jordan.

trade and investment between the two countries."

Australia currently exports U.S. \$50 million to Jordan in meat, livestock (live sheep), dairy products and cereals, with meat and livestock constituting the main items. Imports from Australia constitute 70 per cent of Jordan's live sheep market and 35 per cent of the total sheep market.

In Jordan, Australia competes with Eastern Europe, Turkey and Russia for the sheep market. Jordan is Australia's main supplier of fertilisers, and phosphates with exports to Australia reaching U.S. \$10 million in 1994.

Mr. McMullan said he recognised that the balance of trade between the two countries was grossly in favour of Australia, but said there are signs that the balance will become more equitable, pointing out that bilateral trade has grown since 1990 and is continuing to increase "suggesting a healthy development."

"Jordanians should explore business opportunities in Australia," the minister added.

"We have no tariffs or import quotas — it's a good market."

While most Australian exports are commodities Mr. McMullan said he hoped that Australia would eventually export manufactured goods and services as well as technology to Jordan. Water resource technology he said, may hold the most promise in technological trade with Jordan, and development for the free trade zone is upwards of 80,000 sheep per annum. He added that no sheep are being exported to Israel from Aqaba, but "we hope by the end of February that we will send the first consignment to Israel."

"Through the free trade zones" Jordan has allowed us to streamline our live sheep business in the area."

The development of the free trade zone is a platform for re-export, explained Richard Martin, representative of the AMLC — Australia. "We can export 200,000 sheep to Aqaba for re-export to surrounding countries. We are also involved in the feed lots in the region."

Other members of the Australian delegation expressed enthusiasm for the potential Jordan offers as a centre for regional trade, citing the

stone for Australian livestock trade to the region. In the free trade zone, Australia owns a feed lot for sheep jointly with Jordan (in operation since mid-1994), which according to traders are more efficient and a better environment for the animals.

"One of the main things we expressed this week was how pleased we were with the development of trade with Jordan and development of the free trade zone," said Don Clark, chairman of the Australian Livestock Exports Association.

Australia is an active participant in the water resources multilateral working group for the Middle East peace process.

Other members of the Australian delegation expressed enthusiasm for the potential Jordan offers as a centre for regional trade, citing the

new office on Sunday, Mr. McMullan met with Crown Prince Hassan, who invited Australia to participate in a preliminary series of meetings in Jordan to prepare the ground for the Amman economic summit in October.

According to the Jordan New Agency, Petra, the Crown Prince stressed the need for coordinating efforts to ensure the success of the summit, adding that Australia can contribute positively to the conference by providing its expertise on water, energy and the environment.

Mr. McMullan expressed Australia's willingness to participate in the summit both earlier this week during a meeting with the Minister of Industry and Trade and during a press conference Sunday, adding, "We look forward to exploring any opportunities that we can give support to Jordan."

blissed by the fact that peace has come at a time allowing them to expand to the occupied territories and Israel."

The AMLC has already shipped a consignment of sheep to Gaza, Mr. Martin told the Jordan Times, adding that the potential for Palestine is upwards of 80,000 sheep per annum. He added that no sheep are being exported to Israel from Aqaba, but "we hope by the end of February that we will send the first consignment to Israel."

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According to the Jordan New

Mexican government, Chiapas rebels headed towards stalemate

20,000 marchers demand army withdrawal

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (AP) — The army pushed deeper into former rebel-held territory, despite calls from a church-backed mediation commission for the military to retreat as a condition for new peace talks.

News reporters said that Saturday afternoon they saw some 20 armoured vehicles, troop transports and Humvees rumble into the town of Posada, about 15 kilometres (10 miles) east of their former position in the town of Patzcuaro, east of this mountain community.

By the time reporters got to Posada, all the villagers had fled, leaving behind some frightened dogs, turkeys and other farm animals.

The movement came one day after the National Mediation Commission called for new talks to end a rebel uprising in southern Mexico, but said army troops must withdraw from newly captured Indian villages first.

In Mexico City, nearly 20,000 people danced and marched down a main thor-

oughfare Saturday to the Angel of Independence Monument, demanding that the army pull back troops from territory held by Zapatista rebels.

"We demand the immediate resumption of negotiations and an end to this war," said Martha Martinez, a law student. The slogan "we are all Zapatistas," was painted on her face.

The commission insisted talks begin this month and that a "stable truce" be declared by the end of March. Talks last year ended without result.

There was no immediate response from the government or from the Zapatistas to the commission's call. But Mr. Zedillo, who says he wants to resume peace talks, also has said he has no intention of pulling the troops back.

He said Friday that the government "will never again abdicate its constitutional responsibility to preserve its authority in national territory." He referred to land formerly controlled by the rebels.

The rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army has not been heard from since Wednesday, when they

issued a communiqué repeating their stance: they want to renew peace talks, but the army's presence in the mountains is an obstacle.

The army began occupying pro-rebel villages starting on Feb. 10, one day after Mr. Zedillo announced he was cracking down on rebel leaders. A government arrest warrant is still out for top rebel spokesman Subcomandante Marcos.

Marcos led the Zapatista delegation during last year's talks with the government and would most likely be the lead negotiator in any new talks.

The Commission of Federal Lawmakers charged with trying to restart peace talks was heading back to Mexico City this weekend after visiting southern Chiapas state.

During their visit, they met with the National Mediation Commission and with Amado Avendano, the head of Chiapas' rebel-backed parallel government. They also toured former rebel areas now occupied by government troops.

"It is still possible to pre-

E. Europe vows no compromise on NATO

PRAGUE (R) — Eastern Europe will insist on one overriding condition before accepting an embryonic NATO plan to offer Russia a wider-ranging security treaty.

No pact must ever give Moscow a veto over whether the Central and East European nations, freed only recently from Soviet domination, can join the Western defence alliance.

"If there is a plan we are not against it," an official at the Czech Foreign Ministry said. "If that plan means NATO will expand, it's good for us. But if not, it's the worst possible option," he said, requesting anonymity.

NATO shaken by Russia's hostile reaction to its plans for eastward expansion, is currently looking at ways to buy Moscow's acceptance with a separate security pact out any special deal for Russia beyond Partnership for Peace, a programme open to all post-Communist nations offering only limited military cooperation.

NATO insists Moscow will have no veto over expansion. But suspicions linger in Eastern Europe where memories remain of the 1945 Yalta Agreement, when the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union carved up post-World War II Europe.

That deal consigned Eastern Europe to 40 years of Soviet domination which ended only with the fall of communism in 1989.

Poland, which with Hungary and the Czech and Slovak republics is in the leading group for NATO membership, accepts that Russia has to be treated differently.

"It is not surprising. They (the Russians) have nuclear weapons. It is obvious that NATO's relations with such a superpower as Russia are different from those with, say, Poland," a senior Defense Ministry official said.

"It is in our interest that they (NATO and Russia) solve their painful problems but this must not happen at our expense."

The understanding runs out when it comes to joining: "we will strive to join NATO and we are not going to ask Russia about it," President Lech Walesa told visiting Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin last week.

The problems are indeed painful. Russian President Boris Yeltsin has warned the West of a "cold peace" if it tries to recruit countries which were its allies before communism fell.

Mr. Yeltsin, addressing the

Russian Parliament last Thursday, urged NATO to back Russian democracy rather than seeking to isolate the Kremlin in Europe.

Attacking plans for "hasty expansion," Mr. Yeltsin said: "This continent... has already generated two global military catastrophes, and we do not want Europe and the world to return to old or new division lines."

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe has spoken in favour of a special treaty and German Foreign Minister Volker Ruest has raised the possibility of a deal by the middle of this year.

Mr. Juppe wants to beef up the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe, revitalise the Western European Union — the European Union's defence arm — and the Czechoslavak said Eastern European membership would benefit NATO as much as the new member nations. If NATO did not fill the current security vacuum, Russia would.

"Russia has a tradition of expansion and if there is a space which is undefined, like now, somebody will take it," he said. If NATO did not expand eastwards, "we can expect that Russia will be the power which takes care of

that space."

Other countries seek to soothe Russian fears. "NATO is not expanding to the east, it is East European states that want to go West," Romanian Defence Minister Gheorghe Tincu said.

Budapest also says Moscow has nothing to fear. "We believe that with Hungary's NATO membership the stability of this region would grow," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Gabor Szentes.

Mr. Foot's code name was Boot, according to Mr. Gordievsky, who worked as a spy

for the KGB.

Estonian Deputy Foreign Minister Raul Malm called the NATO idea appealing but said: "Giving preference to one Eastern European country over another may involve very great dangers."

Times on whether it should join NATO at all. Prime Minister Vladimir Meclar supports membership, but his junior coalition partners are not so sure.

Jan Slota, chairman of the far-right Slovak National Party (SNS), called for brotherhood with fellow Slavs. "I personally think there's no threat from Russia. I think there shouldn't be any (defence) pact in Europe at all," he said.

Gen. Nhek Bun Chhay, addressing the

Cambodian army says rebel base about to be taken

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (R) — A senior Cambodian military commander said Sunday his army will capture the Khmer Rouge's main northern headquarters at Anlong Veng within a day or two.

"In general, in one of two days we'll take Anlong Veng. There's only 100 Khmer Rouge fighters still in the area and they're now in the process of contacting us to defect," Lieutenant-General Nhek Bun Chhay told Reuters.

Gen. Nhek Bun Chhay,

deputy chief of the army's general staff, is in overall command of the northern zone of operations.

Captured Khmer Rouge documents shown to Reuters by the general indicate the Khmer Rouge rebel faction is encountering severe supply difficulties and morale problems among its diminishing force of fighters.

The general said that within four or five days there would be no big Khmer Rouge bases left in the north

of the country, only small groups of scattered rebels to continue the low-level guerrilla war against the Phnom Penh government.

The dry-season military operation to secure the northern region, which began in earnest in mid-December last year, has resulted in hundreds of government casualties, mostly from mines and booby traps, soldiers told Reuters Friday.

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wanted the Americans to keep the Obersalzberg property for at least 10 more years to prevent neo-Nazis from visiting.

In June 1993, the U.S. military agreed to give up the Chiemsee resort if Germany paid 30 million marks (\$20 million) to renovate U.S. resort in Berchtesgaden and Obersalzberg.

But the deal fell through, Col. Bridges said, because "it would not have been prudent of us to guarantee staying 10 years." So the army went back to its original plan of abandoning the Berchtesgaden-Obersalzberg resort.

Now, the Chiemsee resort east of Munich and U.S. military hotels in Garmisch-Partenkirchen south of Munich will be kept open indefinitely, he said.

"Garmisch is the centre piece of the armed forces recreation centres... and we had invested roughly \$14 million between 1987 and 1990 in some major upgrades at Chiemsee," Col. Bridges said.

The Obersalzberg resort includes a 270-bed hotel and two villas on the ski slopes of the 1,000-metre (3,300-foot) mountain above Berchtesgaden. The buildings are connected by tunnels and bunkers that were designed as

Hitler's Alpine fortress, but were never completed.

Nearby is Kehlstein Peak, with a restaurant known as "Eagle's Nest," also used by Hitler. It's open to tourists from May to October.

In the town of Berchtesgaden, population of 12,000, the U.S. military is turning over a 90-room hotel, two barracks, 12 family apartments, a post office, shopping centre, and a garage.

The turnover should be completed by September, Col. Bridges said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. resort at Chiemsee will be reopened and 130 employees rehired for the summer season.

Bernau administrator Helmut Schubbeck said the town of 6,000 had counted on 1 million marks (\$600,000) a year in tourism revenues from the Chiemsee properties.

"It's too bad," he said. "They're not mad at the Americans because they see them as friends, but a lot of people are really upset by the Finance Ministry," Mr. Schubbeck said.

Under the status of forces agreement, the U.S. military returns confiscated German property to the federal government. The Finance Ministry then decides whether to hold the property or return it to states and communities.

Ownership of the Obersalzberg properties is already contested.

Berchtesgaden attorney Oskar Steuer represents five descendants of former landowners, who claim they were forced out in the 1930s so Hitler could have his Alpine retreat.

"The expropriation was immoral because the residents were collectively forced into submission," Mr. Steuer said. "We will sue for return of the property."

Meanwhile in Lizzano, Italy, struggling through rain and wind, five U.S. veterans of World War II scaled an Apennine ridge Saturday to reenact their conquest of the mountain 50 years ago in a campaign against the Germans.

Even two German soldiers who were part of the enemy 50 years ago came to the commemoration, including one who had been captured in 1945, said the Americans' spokesman, Dick Wilson.

"We were wrapping our arms around each other. We had a fabulous time," said Wilson, in a telephone interview from Lizzano, in north-central Italy, which served as the group's base for the reenactment.

The U.S. veterans served in the war as part of the 10th Mountain Division.



A woman carries her son, wearing a mask and carrying a toy machine gun to resemble a member of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Mexico City during a protest.

Oldest woman costs punter a fortune

ARLES, France (AFP) — Jeanne Calment, the oldest person in the world who celebrates her 120th birthday Tuesday, has cost a fortune for the man who invested 30 years ago in her apartment banking on her early death. Ms. Calment is still being paid a life annuity by retired solicitor Andre-Francois Raffray, 77, under a "viager" deal by which her apartment here would be his when she died. Convicted he would not have long to wait, Mr. Raffray agreed to pay the old lady 2,500 francs (about \$500) a month in May, 1965, when she was 90. Up to the present he has paid her a total of 900,000 francs (\$180,000), at least three times the value of the apartment. "In life, you can't win them all," said Ms. Calment, still sprightly except for her blindness, in the cosy retirement home where she now lives. Mr. Raffray, who retired years ago, is keeping a low profile, but his ex-wife said: "He is sickened, this affair makes him look ridiculous. He hates this kind of publicity." Ms. Calment, who still applies a little rouge to her wrinkled cheeks, will blow out the 120 candles on her birthday cake Tuesday, and if she stays healthy, she will this year beat the all-time record for longevity held by Japanese geriatric Shigehiko Izumi, who passed away on Feb. 21, 1986, at the age of 120 years and 237 days.

"I was especially close to the Soviet ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, who was a good friend of mine..." "I reported on the matter in my book *Loyalists And Loners* and I would be happy for that chapter to be reproduced for the education of Sunday Times readers... How these matters were reported back to the KGB, heaven knows..." "Reputable English newspapers should be careful not to be fooled by the Soviet secret police."

A Labour spokesman rose to the defence of the party's former chief, asserting that "everyone knows that Michael Foot is a democrat and a patriot and these claims were quickly denied by the politician."

Neil Kinnock, also a former party leader, insisted that "these claims are absurd and the complete opposite of the truth."

Mikhail Lyubimov, another former KGB operative in London questioned by the Sunday Telegraph newspaper, characterised the accusations against Mr. Foot as "half truths."

He said several British politicians had often met KGB agents thinking they were diplomats. The politicians were subsequently described to KGB authorities in Moscow as "agents of influence."

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He spoke after Saturday's announcement that a planned African summit meeting on the refugee crisis in Rwanda and Burundi had been cancelled because of lack of support from the leaders of nearby countries.

Mr. Chavis quit in a scandal over his payment of \$300,000 in NAACP money to a woman who accused him of sexual harassment.

Mr. Nibantunganya said:

"If Burundi continues with these crises we will end up with a genocide worse than that of Rwanda. We must try to marginalise the creators of these crises."

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Half a baseball card on sale — for \$452,000

LOS ANGELES, California (AP) — Half-ownership of a 1910 Honus Wagner baseball card goes on the auction block on March 7 with a minimum price of \$452,000. The card was bought by National Hockey League star Wayne Gretzky and former Los Angeles Kings owner Bruce McNall for a record price of \$451,000 in 1991. Now McNall's half-interest is up for sale, under the supervision of U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Lisa H. Fenning. Any qualified collector can bid for the half, but Gretzky will have the chance to beat the highest offer to gain sole ownership of the card. Cards depicting Wagner, a Hall of Fame player, are rare because he objected to his image being associated with the cigarette advertising on the back. There are only 40 known Wagner cards in existence. This card's association with Gretzky and McNall has also piqued the interest of collectors. The card has had more publicity than any other card in the history of collectible cards," said Larry Goldberg, who heads the auction department of Superior Stamp and Coin, the company McNall sold last year in the face of federal fraud charges. McNall pleaded guilty on December to bank fraud involving \$236 million. He is to be sentenced on July 6, and prosecutors have indicated they may ask for a sentence of up to 11 years.

U.S. civil rights group elects new chief

NEW YORK (R) — The widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers won a one-vote victory Saturday to become chairman of the NAACP, the oldest and largest advocate for African Americans.

Officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People said the election of Myrlie Evers was the result of a vote by 200 supporters of Ms. Evers, who was whoops of joy and even tears of joy at last" from her supporters in the New York hotel.

Ms. Evers-Williams is the widow of Medgar Evers, who was assassinated by white supremacists in Mississippi in 1963 when he was the NAACP's leader in Mississippi.

Among the organization's most pressing tasks is to fight Republican moves to end affirmative action programs, which promote the hiring and education of ethnic minorities.

Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, hailed Ms. Evers-Williams' victory saying that the election "sends the message that the organization is now ready to recapture its vital role in our society."

Sources said the vote was 30 for Ms. Evers-Williams to 29 for Mr. Gibson, a South Carolina dentist who has run the NAACP for a decade and was chairman when its controversial executive Director Benjamin Chavis was forced to resign last year.

Mr. Chavis quit in a scandal over his payment of \$300,000 in NAACP money to a woman who accused him of sexual harassment.

Mr. Gibson has been dogged by allegations that he misused NAACP funds and allowed the civil



Peruvian army soldiers patrol the Cenepa River and surrounding area near the PV 1 military base in the Cordillera Del Condor area of the Peruvian Amazon, Peru

and Ecuador signed a ceasefire in Brasilia after border skirmishes claimed the lives of at least 70 soldiers on both sides (AFP photo)

Phone-tapping scandals loom over French leaders

PARIS (AFP) — A phone-tapping scandal moved a step closer to French Premier Edouard Balladur this weekend in a case which could seriously embarrass the frontrunner for upcoming presidential ballots.

In a separate development the office of President François Mitterrand was also further implicated in alleged illegal telephone surveillance.

The scandal involving Mr. Balladur's Matignon office was fuelled Saturday when it conceded it had authorised telephone "surveillance" of a psychiatrist, Dr. Jean-Pierre Marechal, father-in-law of a prominent anti-corruption judge.

The Marechal case broke last December when it was revealed that he had received a briefcase containing one million francs (\$185,000) in cash from Rally for the Republic (RPR) party official Didier Schuller.

The cash was allegedly given in return for his influence with his son-in-law, Judge Eric Halphen to slow down investigation into alleged illegal funds.

Slowing down the complex affair until after the presidential elections in April and May would benefit all involved, but particularly the French prime minister.

Mr. Balladur's office said Saturday that Marechal's phone was tapped in connection with extortion allegations. It justified the action by saying it was investigating "blackmail and extortion."

French law however only permits this particular type of phone-tapping in cases involving terrorism, organised crime or espionage.

It can also only take place with the authorisation of the

ministry concerned — that of Interior Minister Charles Pasqua — and of the prime minister's office.

Judge Halphen is one of a handful of anti-corruption judges who have in recent months probed financial wrongdoing in political and business circles, forcing the resignation of three Balladur ministers.

New corruption evidence could only harm Mr. Balladur, who is still the frontrunner to succeed Mr. Mitterrand, but whose popularity has in recent weeks begun to falter.

The financing racket took the form of fake invoicing and commissions for public works and housing contracts for Paris City Hall and the regional council of the neighbouring Hauts-de-Seine Department. Mr. Pasqua's power-base.

Last month, the Supreme Council of the Magistracy (CSM), the judiciary's top disciplinary body, ruled there should be taken off the case despite the Marechal affair.

The Paris prosecutor's office, under the authority of Mr. Balladur's Justice Minister Pierre Mehaiguerie, had said Judge Halphen was in no way to blame for the Marechal affair, but could not continue to investigate the RPR case.

In another development on the case Sunday, Mr. Mehaiguerie condemned in an interview with the Journal du Dimanche comments by a pro-Balladur RPR deputy, Patrick Balkany, criticising Judge Halphen over the case.

The comments by Mr. Balladur in the French newspaper Le Parisien Friday, and those by Mr. Mehaiguerie, are likely to fuel the controversy in the run-up to the

first round of presidential elections on April 23.

Meanwhile in a separate development over the weekend, Mr. Mitterrand too faced new phone-tapping allegations.

Saturday's Le Monde said five computer discs containing evidence of illegal phone-tapping carried out by an Elysee anti-terrorist cell in the mid-1980s had been handed over to investigating magistrate Jean-Paul Valat.

It said the discs contained "stunning evidence" against the presidential cell, in particular implicating officers in the group, but also Mr. Mitterrand's former chief of staff, Gilles Menage.

A former member of the Elysee cell, Pierre-Yves Guezou, committed suicide last December.

Balladur slow off the blocks in presidential race

Meanwhile two months ahead of the first round of polls, the Conservative party's official rank-greeting by yawning disappointment and dogged by renewed scandals involving his ruling centre-right coalition.

His rightwing rival Jacques Chirac and Socialist Lionel Jospin pressed ahead with vigorous campaigns in a three-way race which shows every sign of getting tough.

Mr. Balladur's bid to replace President Mitterrand suffered a new blow Sunday with a poll showing he had lost nine points in a month — following a clutch of similar surveys which have been sounding the alarm in his camp for the last week.

The poll, in the Journal du Dimanche, still put him comfortably in front. But it gave him a 46 per cent popularity

rating against 55 per cent last month, and said 48 per cent of the French electorate was dissatisfied with him.

In an editorial the paper pointed out that all Balladur supporters knew: "It was predictable that his popularity would fall once he became a candidate. What is surprising is the brutality of his fall."

Mr. Balladur, who was appointed prime minister following a landslide victory for the French right in parliamentary elections, has for some months sought to keep himself above the political rough-and-tumble, portraying himself as a steady hand at the helm of a steady state.

The strategy seemed to be working. After the withdrawal of European Commission head Jacques Delors from the race in December, Mr. Balladur almost overnight took over his position at the head of the opinion polls, with leads of excess of 20 per cent over his nearest rival.

The first sign that this

strategy was working came when the Socialist Party (PS), in disarray following Mr. Delors' departure, finally rallied around former Education Minister Jospin at the start of this month.

Mr. Jospin has since surged to within 10 points of Mr. Balladur in polls of voter intention for the two-round presidential contest, scheduled for April and May.

Mr. Balladur's formal campaign launch last week was intended to seize back the initiative. But the speech was widely criticised as lacklustre and seen as merely a restatement of the policies he has pursued for the last two years.

One Socialist deputy called him the "master of soporific communication."

Russia works on Serbia

Sunday morning east of Vejka Kladusa, stronghold of businessman-turned-rebel leader Fikret Abdic.

"They are fighting for ground but we haven't seen a change in the confrontation line or any major success," said the U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo, British Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward.

The United Nations said Saturday Bosnian Serbs fired two mortar bombs into the Sarajevo residential area near Sarajevo airport, but there were no injuries.

It followed a shooting incident in which two Serbs, one policeman, were killed in the Serb-held suburb of Vojkovic.

Serbs fighting for an independent state in Bosnia have been besieging Sarajevo since April 1992.

Mr. Kozyrev and Mr. Milosevic met in a hunting lodge Saturday in remote northern Serbia to discuss a

wider ceasefire was called off after both sides refused to attend, Col. Coward said.

On Saturday, government officers cried off from a scheduled meeting with the Serbs.

The ceasefire, designed to last four months and encourage peace talks, has generally held since Jan. 1 but has lately shown signs of strain.

They said sanctions hindered peace efforts and complicated the crisis.

Mr. Milosevic would face enormous domestic political opposition to cutting off Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia, effectively abandoning the nationalist dream of a greater Serbia.

Mr. Kozyrev, whose government is Mr. Milosevic's closest international ally, has said the Serbian leader should not be pushed too far.

Major's grip on power weakens as MP dies

LONDON (Agencies) — Prime Minister John Major's precarious grip on power was weakened further Sunday by the death of a Conservative MP and signs that feuding within the ruling party over the European Union was refusing to die down.

The death in hospital of Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, a maverick member of parliament with a tiny majority in his Scottish seat, reduces the government's already weak control over parliament.

The Scottish Nationalists, just 2,094 votes behind Sir Nicholas at the 1992 general election, look set to grab the Perthshire seat, theoretically putting the Conservatives in a minority of seven in the House of Commons.

Mr. Major's prospects of holding the constituency will be fatally weakened if Conservative infighting over Europe continues.

But the dispute showed few signs of ending Sunday as a former Conservative prime minister demanded the sacking of ministers who did not subscribe to Mr. Major's call for Britain to be "at the heart of Europe."

In an article in the *News Of The World* newspaper, Edward Heath, who as prime minister took Britain into the European Union in the 1970s, wrote:

"We are voting because of the security forces and we want democracy," a woman voter said in Imphal.

4 killed, 17 hurt in Indian state poll violence

IMPHAL, India (R) — Four people were killed and at least 17 injured in state election violence in Manipur, northeast India, Sunday but voters turned out in large numbers.

Police blamed the People's Liberation Army (PLA), a separatist militia dominated by ethnic Meitei, which had threatened to disrupt the polling.

The election, contested mainly between Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party and the regional Manipur People's Party, is part of a series of polls in six Indian states.

Congress, which currently holds power in Manipur, lost three of four states that voted

in late 1994 and the result here could have a bearing on Mr. Rao's leadership.

Results of the two-stage election — the first stage was last Thursday — are expected next Thursday.

The elections have been marred by violence," said I.N. Vohra, a senior Manipur police official.

Police said two civilians were killed and 10 injured in an exchange of fire after an ambush by suspected members of the PLA. Five members of the security forces were also hurt.

Another suspected Meitei was killed and two more were wounded in a clash near a police station 40 kilometres from the state

capital Imphal.

Police said a fourth man was killed about 30 kilometres from Imphal when a hand grenade he threw at a crowd near a television transmission station rebounded and exploded.

Police found two explosive devices hanging from a tree in suburban Imphal while another planted in a city school was defused. Mr. Vohra said.

A television relay centre in Imphal was set on fire just before polling began, causing extensive damage and cutting off broadcasts relayed from New Delhi, officials said. Transmissions were later restored.

The clashes came despite

an intense security operation which saw 40,000 men on the streets to protect an electorate over 750,000 in the hilly state bordering Burma.

Chief electoral officer Jarnail Singh said the turnout was more than 85 per cent.

"People have been enthusiastic though bombs have been thrown here and there," he told Reuters.

People brought painted earthen pots and decorated polling booths as Hindu symbols of good omens and offered prayers for peaceful election.

"We are voting because of the security forces and we want democracy," a woman voter said in Imphal.

Opposition attacks Fujimori on Peru-Ecuador ceasefire

LIMA (AFP) — President Alberto Fujimori, running for re-election in April, has come under fire for the terms of a ceasefire ending a three-week border conflict with Ecuador.

Mr. Fujimori's political opponents maintain that the ceasefire signed late Thursday in Brasilia requires Peruvian forces to pull back several kilometres behind what Peru considers to be its border.

Meanwhile, Peruvian troops retreating from the combat zone testified that they saw "at least 300 dead Ecuadorans" and that Peruvian losses were higher than the government has reported.

Ecuador and Peru signed the ceasefire after border skirmishes claimed the lives of at least 70 soldiers on both sides.

The press reported one of the Peruvian troops pulling out of the disputed territory said "on our way we ran into no less than 300 dead Ecuadorans in the combat zone."

The retreating Peruvian soldiers also said their forces had lost more than the roughly 30 troops the government reported killed, but they would not give a more precise number.

Most of the border between Peru and Ecuador was demarcated following the signing of the Rio Protocol in 1942 to end an earlier conflict between the Andean neighbours.

The only portion left over was the 78 kilometres stretch in the Condor Mountains that the two countries began fighting over in late January.

President Alberto Fujimori's closest rival in the April 9 race, former U.N. Secretary General Javier

Perez de Cuellar, strongly supported Mr. Fujimori during the conflict, and at the risk of their lives?" demanded a prominent politician and former lawmaker Enrique Bermeo.

"What was the use of the sacrifices of our heroic soldiers who died defending Cueva De Los Tayos, Base Sur and Tintinza?" asked leftist Deputy Héctor Pease, referring to the three bases that the fighting focused on despite Mr. Pease's statement.

Curiously, one of Fujimori's top supporters, Carlos Torres Y Torres Lara, implicitly acknowledged that the ceasefire agreement did in some ways mean a change in Peru's policies.

"The conflict zone constitutes a space where there has been military confrontation, an area over which there is a question," he said.

This enraged the opposition.

"Why has the government agreed to put on the negotia-

tion table land that our soldiers recovered with courage, heroism and at the risk of their lives?" demanded a prominent politician and former lawmaker Enrique Bermeo.

Mr. Fujimori's April 1992 decision to shutter Congress and temporarily rule by decree did not cost him support.

In pushing through a rewriting of the constitution, one of the measures he insisted on was an elimination of a ban on re-election of presidents that allowed him to throw his hat in for a second term.

By making all decisions associated with the war, Mr. Fujimori now runs the risk of keeping all the blame should the ceasefire accord turn out to be unpopular.

Political analysts say Mr. Fujimori will have a hard time allaying the doubts that the opposition has planted about him on the emotionally charged issue of Peruvian sovereignty.



A Peruvian army soldier takes a break in the Cordillera Del Condor area of the Peruvian Amazon (AFP photo)

Unionists to publish own plans for British rule

BELFAST (R) — Protestant politicians bitterly opposed to Anglo-Irish peace plans for Northern Ireland said Sunday they will publish their own proposals for keeping British rule and funding off links with the IRA.

The announcement came as the British and Irish governments prepared to make public their own ideas for how Northern Ireland should be governed.

Political analysts say Unionists are prepared to talk about everybody's proposals as well as their own...

If the framework document is as (Irish) nationalist as it sounds already, you wouldn't expect the Unionists to talk on such a national agenda."

Mr. Major has denied that the Anglo-Irish document leans towards appealing nationalists. He says it is a balanced strategy aimed at getting cross-community links with Dublin.

The two governments have reached broad agreement on controversial new peace moves involving all-Ireland constitutional and institutional reforms.

But London and Dublin have failed to convince Northern Ireland's majority Protestants that these are not an underhand threat to their cherished centuries old ties with Britain.

Mainstream Protestant Unionist parties say they will have nothing to do with the two governments' so-called

"We are giving them (Britain and Dublin) a way out of their own

party. He demanded that their cabinet should stick closely to official policy in public.

But the result appears to have been merely to encourage former party heavyweights to pick up the cudgels.

"Euro-sceptic" former Finance Minister Norman Lamont Friday accused Mr. Major of failing to commit himself on whether Britain should join a single EU currency, saying "deciding to be undecided" would solve nothing.

Following Sir Nicholas' death, Mr. Major had a majority of only 12 seats in the Commons even if the nine expelled Eurorebels are counted as his supporters.

With few Conservative seats safe in the present political climate, by-elections could cancel out that majority weight before the next general election due in May, 1997.

In a by-election last week, the Conservative candidate won less than four per cent of the vote in a South Wales constituency where the party gained almost 15 per cent at the 1992 election.

In a by-election last week, the Conservative candidate won less than four per cent of the vote in a South Wales constituency where the party gained almost 15 per cent at the 1992 election.

"His colourful, dynamic personality will be sorely missed by his family, friends and supporters in the constituency as well as by his many friends and colleagues in the Palace of Westminster."

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Features



JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1995

Long-distance runner on his last lap

Felipe Gonzalez was the saviour of the Spanish left, but his scandal-struck administration cannot last for ever. Elizabeth Nash examines the leader's long career

WHEN FELIPE Gonzalez was campaigning for the elections that swept him to power in 1982, it was said he had his sideboards tinted silver to make him look more statesmanlike. He was only 40 although he had been politically active for 18 years, 13 of them fighting Franco's dictatorship.

More than vanity made him go to such lengths to project his gravitas. Only 18 months before, a colonel in the civil guard, Antonio Tejero, had marched into parliament and held nearly every political politician in Spain at gunpoint for 24 hours. Veteran socialists, elected by the people, crouched on the floor of the chamber and ate their party cards in fear of reprisals by Francoists. The elections in October 1982 produced a Socialist landslide which, to everyone's surprise and relief, the armed forces accepted without a murmur.

"This victory," Mr. Gonzalez said, "more than that of a party, is the victory of democracy and the Spanish people." This was not just rhetoric. The moment Mr. Gonzalez became prime minister marked the realisation that Spain's peaceful transition to democracy had succeeded. It showed the world that the Franco era was finished for good.

Since then, every big decision in Spain has passed through Felipe Gonzalez's hands. Successes during the boom years of the eighties made him believe that he could control circumstances and determine the destiny of his country. But as the world recession battered the Spanish economy, unemployment stuck at one in four and corruption seethed and bubbled around him, the people did not have to ask who was responsible: They started to send him the bills.

Mr. Gonzalez was born in 1942 in the southern city of Seville. One of four children of a modest dairy farmer, he was the only one to go to university, where he studied law. A diligent student, his first political act was to protest against a visit to Seville in 1963 by Franco's tourism minister Manuel Álvarez, today a leader of the opposition People's Party.

He studied economics for six months at Louvain university in Belgium; on his return to Seville in 1964 he set up as a labour lawyer and swiftly won a reputation for defending workers unfairly sacked by their employers.

He struck up with another, more acerbic young lawyer, Alfonso Guerra, and between them they started to rebuild the once-mighty Socialist Party throughout Andalucía, cell by cell, village by village. Most of the old exiled socialists from the civil war were out of touch with what



Gonzalez and Mr. Guerra started to organise a new generation of socialists in Spain.

In July 1969 he borrowed Guerra's Renault and drove to Bayonne to a meeting of the PSOE executive to deliver some home truths to the party's exiled leadership about the resurgence in Andalucía. Such was his eagerness to make the trip that he missed the civil ceremony of his wedding to Carmen Romero. A friend stood in for him.

Mr. Gonzalez quietly started to enlist the support of other European socialist leaders, Bruno Kreisky, Olaf Palme and especially Willy Brandt, who came to

by Europe's social democratic leaders. Felipe Gonzalez — still known by his *nom-de-guerre*, "Isidoro" — was elected leader of the still illegal party at a conference held outside Paris in 1974.

By 1977 the party was legalised in Spain, and within weeks he was on the hustings and elected MP in the first free elections since 1936. Unusually tall in a nation of short men, he strolled into the limelight and charmed a nation with his natural assurance, his boy-next-door smile, his black hair flopping on to his open collar and his commanding platform manner.

By speaking as if to his

pals over a beer, he captivated but not patronised, familiar but not condescending, ironical but not abrasive, young, handsome and serious, the perfect role model for a generation of young Spaniards bored and repelled by the Franco strait-jacket. And his soft Sevillian consonants reassured Spain's proud regions that he was not part of Madrid's Castilian elite.

The late 1970s were exciting times in Spain. With Franco dead and the democratic forces pushing ahead, there was everything to play for. The Socialist Party, emerging from its clandestine existence and bulging with new recruits, held con-

Felipe, above, the right man at the right moment, pulling together the Spanish Socialists with the help of Germany's Willy Brandt and Britain's Michael Foot in 1976; left, the victor of the 1982 election; top right, the statesman with Chancellor Helmut Kohl; right depression as crises gather



gress after congress in those positions, in the "delicious" knowledge that getting it right would take it into power. Mr. Gonzalez was perfect, the right man at the right moment. Spaniards adored him. The whole country called him Felipe.

In 1978, after a huge debate, the Socialist Party decided to define itself as Marxist. Thousands of delegates flung their fists in the air and roared the Internationale.

At this moment, Felipe Gonzalez casually resigned. I am not a Marxist, he said. I never have been, and you can call the party Marxist if you want to but not with me as leader. He was more

interested in winning the majority of Spaniards than in ideological purity. And he walked off the platform. The party was stunned. It swiftly watered down the reference to Marx and in a few months Mr. Gonzalez came back. The comrades marched smartly to the right and into government, and everyone learned the lesson: Without Felipe the Socialist Party was nothing. After his election victory in 1982, he spoke from a prepared text for the first time, always wore a tie, stopped giving the clenched-fist salute.

Henceforth everything in the party and the country took place on Mr. Gonzalez's terms, and this is

why, even if nothing is ever

alliance against him; he also surrounded himself with bankers and policemen who have one by one trooped into prison under suspicion of corruption.

He does not cling to power for personal aggrandisement or enrichment. "Being in power seems enough for him," said one supporter. Despite the sleaze lapping at his ankles, even his bitter foes have been unable to pin upon him personally any hint of shady dealing or impropriety.

But he and his team, so fresh and eager in 1982, now sit in their ministries drained of enthusiasm and ideas, paralysed in the face of the crisis that will not go away.

Mr. Gonzalez, never a great man for detail, became bored with day-to-day domestic politics. He immersed himself in his Moncloa palace, rarely appeared in parliament, suffered periodic fits of depression and became disinclined to listen to advice. He broke with his lifelong friend and right-hand man, Alfonso Guerra, whose brother was involved in a scandal. Other close friends left him down.

The party in the country shrivelled. Worst of all, no one stepped forward, nor was groomed, to pump new blood into the old leadership. The Socialist Party, after the trauma of 1978, continues to be a one-man band.

In the seventies, Mr. Gonzalez admitted that he was an insomniac and that he smoked too many cigars. He said his favourite book was *Don Quixote*, that he found it relaxing. Today Mr. Gonzalez's whole head is flecked with grey, and he probably looks sometimes to slip from public view and settle down with Cervantes and a Havana.

But not yet. He wants to ride the crisis and go where he chooses. In particular he has set his heart on heading Spain's EU presidency, which starts in July.

A friend of Mr. Gonzalez, who has worked with him throughout his career, said this week: "Felipe is a long-distance runner. He will never quit when things are going wrong for him. He was preparing to resign at a moment when things were going well, but then all these problems started. Now that everything is going wrong he will never quit."

But Mr. Gonzalez himself seems aware that he is on the last lap. "After so many years in government I have lost credibility," he admitted in parliament recently.

None the less he has now embarked on a race against time, in an effort to outstrip the tumbling avalanche of scandal and sleaze before it engulfs him.

The Independent

form its duties. (So have they weakened) the Arab summit institution. We hope it will be reactivated.

"Our relations with Israel are good and (based on) mutual respect. We have no problem. We were careful that relations are developed on the basis of understanding on the highest levels that would define the red and green lines. Relations are normal at this stage."

"There are many problems in this area. They have to be tackled. (If Arabs have better relations, especially at the highest levels) I believe the situation will be much better."

ON Israeli fears that better Jordanian-Israeli peace will beachmark the peace process:

"No, Jordan is part of this peace treaty with Israel should have weakened (the Syrian negotiating position) in any way. On the contrary, it could be a precedent (for moving) in the right direction."

ON the Arab differences over the Iranian role in the area and the mechanism for forming a common Arab position towards Iran:

"Regrettably, such a mechanism does not exist. For example, all the Arabs have played a role in paralysing the Arab League and hindering its ability to per-

form its duties. (So have they weakened) the Arab summit institution. We hope it will be reactivated.

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PLO to chart new strategy

(Continued from page 1)

Treaty precedent for Arab peace with Israel

(Continued from page 1)

anybody's hand," His Majesty said, adding that Jordan will not allow anybody to force it to adjust its policies in a way that would suit others' requirements.

Responding to a question, the King said Jordan's position on the signing of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a principled one that is not necessarily connected to the Egyptian or Israeli stands. He explained that Jordan demands that all weapons of mass destruction in the area be eliminated, expressing hope that the countries of the region will reach agreement on this issue.

King Hussein said that the Kingdom's ties with the Arab Gulf countries "are much better than they used to be (after the Gulf war)," and he expressed hope that they will be restored to their previous levels. The King stressed his concern for the Iraqi people, saying he hoped that Iraq will once again be able to play its role in the region.

Following are excerpts from the Al Hayat interview:

On obstacles to normalisation of ties with Israel:

"We do not believe that there are obstacles that cannot be overcome in time. Some of us might have opinions on normalisation that have to do with persons and their feelings. I believe that the great majority (of the people) is aware that there has to be progress (in the implementation) of what has been agreed upon... in order to meet the needs of the people in the coming period."

"This can only come through working in this new atmosphere on the basis of two aspects. The first is the (feeling of) security in the present and the future, which is something that was missing in

the past. The second (aspect) is

that many opportunities have been made available by the new circumstances. We have restored our land and water and now we have recognised international borders (with Israel). I believe that some time will pass (before the expectations for a fast change are realised). Most of the projects (expected of the peace process) are big projects. There was an economic summit in Casablanca, which will be held this year (to discuss these projects). I believe it will be possible to shed the light on certain projects and things would consequently move in the right direction."

ON the impact of the difficulties of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the implementation of Jordanian-Israeli accords and the development of bilateral relations:

"I have spoken of, and will always repeat, our concern that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty be... part of the process of building comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the whole area. We hope that will continue on other tracks with the objective of reaching this peace."

ON whether Jordan has fears that Israel will not abide by all its commitments to Jordan under the treaty:

"Everything that has been agreed upon so far has been implemented... (Israel) has withdrawn from (Jordanian) land has been completed... (agreements) on water are in their way (to implementation)... everything is working according to what has been agreed on."

"As an observer, (I have an) observation on the Oslo accord (which is in a desperate situation)... it seemed to me, for example, that when (the Palestinians and the Israelis) agreed that the period of five years (from the signing of the Oslo accord) is the period in which steps for tackling the major problems are taken... I believe that what (they aimed at was the creation) of a different atmos-

phere from the one which we are currently living in, in terms of security, stability and giving people the feeling that the new situation will lead them to the desired result... this has not materialised... hence is the talk now about entering directly into dealing with the big issue (the final status negotiations).

"We watch with concern how things will proceed towards the desired solution..."

"At the same time, I have said and will say again (that Jordan is ready) to support our brethren... once we understand what they want us to offer."

ON the impact of the difficulties of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the implementation of Jordanian-Israeli accords and the development of bilateral relations:

"I believe that the elimination of mass destruction weapons and the prevention of their development in this area are (vital requirements). What we wish for is to reach an agreement on the elimination of these weapons in the whole area. The issue is not exclusively Egyptian-Israeli one."

"The Jordanian position is a principled one. It is not connected to the Egyptian and Israeli stands..."

ON Syrian accusations that Jordan moved fast to normalise ties with Israel:

"In my last (meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad) I told him that Syria can afford to (move slower than Jordan) in its negotiation with Israel and that if the right conditions present themselves, we will move towards peace and we are for a comprehensive solution."

"My relations with (Syrian President Hafez Al Assad) are the closest to us and we are the closest to them... but we had it with doubts and suspicions."

ON the importance of closer coordination with Palestinians for the interest of the two peoples:

"We welcome closer coordination. We have always called for coordination."

ON whether Jordan will agree to be a partner with the Palestinians in the final status negotiations:

"As for accusations (against Jordan) they are many and there is nothing new in that. But we

hope that Arab relations will not be formed on the basis of such considerations and that we will not go to that level in making accusations of treason and then reversing them as easy to do."

ON the King's perception of the solution to the refugees and displaced Palestinian persons:

"(As for the displaced persons) there is an arrangement for a mechanism to deal with this issue. There is a Palestinian-Jordanian committee (to deal with it). (As for refugees) the solution is related to international legitimacy and the right to compensation or to return. But until (a solution) materialises, we in Jordan, regardless of origins, have become one family and we will remain so and will project national unity. But if anybody chooses (their potential) we will implement the peace treaty fully."

ON his views on the Alexandria summit:

"I believe it gave the impression that (the relations) were as desired... we hope relations (between Jordan and Egypt) will in the future be as they once were."

ON the Egyptian-Israeli dispute over the NPT:

"I hope that Arab relations will not be formed on the basis of such considerations and that we will not go to that level in making accusations of treason and then reversing them as easy to do."

ON whether Jordan will be a part of this peace treaty with Israel:

"No, Jordan is part of this peace treaty with Israel should have weakened (the Syrian negotiating position) in any way. On the contrary, it could be a precedent (for moving) in the right direction."

ON whether the peace process is lifted this year:

"I have no idea. Hopefully there will be a thaw. That would at least have positive implications for the Iraqi people."

ON whether the peace process is irreversible:

"We hope so."

ON Jordan's position on the Western policy of dual containment of Iraq and Iran and whether it is possible that it will produce opposite results from those desired from it:

"Jordan needs to modernise and develop its Armed Forces so that it can protect itself, its democracy. And fulfil its duty if there is a need for it in this area or (in U.N. peacekeeping missions)."

ON the regional role for the Armed Forces:

"Jordan needs to train armies of other Arab countries and had the honour of fulfilling its duty towards its brethren when it was asked during the first Kuwaiti crisis (in the sixties) and in Oman. There is a role for (the Jordanian Armed Forces) — We are still speaking of one nation. We cannot forget this. But the important thing is that Jordan will not be a force that will threaten anybody. The basic thing is that Jordan has the right to exercise its right to self-defense."

ON whether Jordan is still calling

for a rapid deployment Arab force and on the nature of the major threats facing the Arab region:

"Treaties are numerous... but (as for) the call (for an Arab rapid deployment force), we have abandoned it for the time being. We spoke of an Arab regiment. I don't think that our proposal (for the regiment) was inappropriate. One day we might adopt this idea again."

ON the Iraqi role in the peace process:

"Iraq must be a part of this area and a part of its nation. My concern and pain is for the Iraqi people and their suffering. Nothing more, nothing less. It is inevitable that Iraq ones

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

CBJ gives banks more freedom

★★ The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has cancelled a ceiling on bank credits imposed since 1992. Under that ceiling banks were not allowed to extend credits beyond 90 per cent of total deposits. The CBJ will now resort to indirect management of monetary policy such as influencing interest rate movements (Al Aswad).

★★ Salem Al Lawzi, director-general of the Agricultural Marketing Organisation, said the concept of open public markets for produce was a pioneering idea but it has not been implemented in a scientific way until now. He explained that the land assigned for the scheme was not adequate and that the authorities were too hasty in announcing the plan. Dr. Lawzi said the idea will surely succeed when farmers are convinced that prices for their produce are low at central markets and there can fetch better prices at the open public markets (Al Aswad).

★★ The Ministry of Supply has fixed the price of Dunhill light cigarettes at JD 1.100 per pack (Al Ra'i).

★★ Fayed Khasawneh, president of the Aqaba Regional Authority, estimated the total cost of hotels and other touristic facilities to be set up in Aqaba at JD 500 million. He expected there would be more than 2,500 additional hotel rooms to increase the capacity (Al Dostour).

★★ According to Abdulla Wirayyat, head of the Society of Investors at the Sahab Industrial City, investment at the city amount to \$1 billion. They are 52 foreign investors in various industries at the city, which accounts for 40 per cent of Jordan's exports, including minerals. Mr. Wirayyat said that 325 companies have their plants in the 2,800-dunum city. Mr. Wirayyat said the city's main problems are the water shortage and the difficult telephone services (Al Dostour).

★★ The Ministry of Transport is expected to invite bids soon to carry out six vital projects at Aqaba port at an estimated cost of JD 63 million. The ministry will expand the port's wharves at an approximate cost of JD 55 million to raise the capacity of the container wharf as well as the wharves for passengers and services. The ministry will build a 4.5-kilometre road between the main wharf and the container wharf at a cost of JD 4 million, pave new yards, including free zone yards, at a cost of JD 2 million to raise storing capacity and open and pave a 3.5-kilometre road for trucks from the port to the southern wharves at a cost of JD 2 million (Al Ra'i).

★★ The government will soon issue a decision to halt about JD 1 million in subsidies to tobacco farmers starting the coming season. The decision falls in line with the government policy to provide subsidies only to strategic products and comes at a time when farmers are exceeding the 29,000 dunums area allowed for planting tobacco. Plants manufacturing cigarettes have large stocks of tobacco in their stores (Al Dostour).

★★ The Aqaba Railway Corporation transported 2,540,103 tonnes of phosphate from Al Hasa and Al Abiad mines in 1994. Volume transported from Al Hasa mine amounted to 1,880,078 tonnes while the volume transported from Al Abiad mine amounted to 660,075 tonnes. An average of seven trains transported the phosphate every day. According to the corporation's director-general it will cost about D50 million to connect the bidyiyah mine to the railway network (Al Ra'i).

Dubai expects boom from M.E. peace

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai expects peace in the Middle East to trigger an investment inflow into its free trade zone of Jebel Ali, the zone's chairman said in an interview published Sunday.

Sultan Ibn Sulayem said the zone, 40 kilometres south of Dubai city, had already attracted nearly 750 companies from Japan, India and other countries, investing more than \$1 billion.

"The number of companies will increase to 2,000 at the end of this century. The zone is already close to achieving its initial target of attracting 1,000 companies with the advent of peace in the region," he told Al Ittihad daily. "The zone will attract more investment as overseas funds are chosing Jebel Ali for investing in distribution or small

industries," Mr. Sulayem said.

He urged investors to set up petrochemical industries in the zone to tap the large gas resources of nearby Sharjah emirate.

Meanwhile a major new investment company being set up by private investors and the Dubai government is expected to primary share market in the United Arab Emirates, economists and brokers said Sunday.

Five-five per cent of the Dubai Investment Company's 1.3 billion dinars (\$355 million) capital will be raised by public share offering, making it the largest joint stock investment company in the UAE, they said.

Of the remaining 45 per cent, the Dubai government

will hold about 13 per cent, the biggest individual shareholding. Other main founders include five Dubai-based banks, they added.

Investors will pay about 50 per cent of the authorised capital at this stage, the balance to be paid up in five years, brokers said.

Brokers expect the first share offering of 650 million dinars (\$178 million) in March. It will be the largest issue in the primary market in the United Arab Emirates since 1995.

The share offering is expected to give the local stock market a boost by absorbing some of the excess local liquidity.

The UAE has an unofficial stock market in which shares are traded by telephone through brokers.

British businessmen bask in Iraqi hospitality

BAGHDAD (R) — British industrialists are being showered with hospitality on their current Baghdad visit, and a spokesman for the group said the businessmen were seeing a vast potential market ahead for Britain.

"We have been received incredibly well," Edmund Sykes, coordinator of the commercial lobby group, the Iraqi British Interests Group, told Reuters.

"We have had fantastic meetings. There is vast potential for us now and in the future," Mr. Sykes said.

The 25 businessmen arrived in Baghdad Friday to explore ways to resume some form of business with Iraq

despite tight U.N. sanctions imposed on Baghdad following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The official English language daily, the Baghdad Observer, published an open letter to the businessmen, welcoming their visit and heaping praise on "their courageous move."

Sources close to the group said the businessmen would try to exert pressure on their government to soften its stand on Iraq sanctions at the U.N. Security Council.

The businessmen were holding discussions with officials of Iraq's central bank and the ministries of irrigation, health, agriculture, industry, oil, transport and communications, interior and foreign affairs.

The group includes a representative from the firm De La Rue, which prints bank notes. Iraq says notes worth millions of dinars were printed in Britain before the 1990 Gulf war but were now locked away in London as a

Meeting is also taking place at the ministries of oil and industry and a source said British companies were seeking to sell equipment to the Iraqi oil industry once sanctions were eased or lifted.

Suez Canal revenues fall slightly in 1994

ISMAILIYA, Egypt (AFP) — Revenues from Egypt's Suez Canal dropped from \$1.98 billion dollars in 1993 to \$1.90 billion last year, a spokesman for the canal authority, Hassan Rifaat, said Saturday. The drop came even though Egyptian authorities dredged the canal last year to allow ships of heavier tonnage to sail through the waterway rather than around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. The head of the canal authority, Mohammad Ezzat Adel, said in November on the 125th anniversary of the canal's construction that fees for using the canal would not be increased in 1995. Mr. Adel said he expected revenues to fall because of inflation in the international shipping business.

Salomon Brothers closes division for rich individual investors

NEW YORK (AFP) — Financial firm Salomon Brothers has said it was closing its private investment department, which catered to wealthy individual investors. "We are discontinuing our private investment business in order to concentrate our resources on our core advisory, underwriting and trading business," said Salomon Brothers chairman and chief executive officer Deryck Maughan. The private investment department will close in April. The two heads of department, Bill Heyman and Rich Sachs will be given other jobs with Salomon Brothers, but the firm gave no indication of what would become of the rest of the division's 115 employees. Spokesman Robert Baker said "we have two months until April to decide on a case by case basis." Salomon Inc., Salomon Brothers' parent company, made a loss of \$364 million in 1994, its first since the company was quoted on the stock exchange in 1981. The results reflected a fall in bond broking operations, but also accounting problems such as an unresolved difference between the London office and the New York headquarters over an item totalling \$140 million. Salomon Inc. has said it would tighten control of Salomon Brothers' employees and could cut commission rates if the performance did not improve.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BUREAU CENTER - AMMAN - SEMIRAMI TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 19/02/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	PREV. TRADED JD	CLOSING PRICE	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PSC	780	146665	188.000	188.000	188.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	5050	22578	4.380	4.450	4.450
BANK OF JORDAN	2307	9955	4.300	4.320	4.320
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	150	540	3.550	3.600	3.600
MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENT BANK	1000	1800	1.100	1.100	1.100
THE HOUSING BANK	3050	8373	2.750	2.750	2.750
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	335	1010	3.020	3.020	3.020
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2600	9954	3.830	3.840	3.840
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	2000	8180	4.100	4.050	4.050
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	1249	1212	1.100	1.100	1.100
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	2947	11986	4.000	4.100	4.100
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	23200	33979	1.460	1.470	1.470
BANKS SCTOR	73440	315569	INDEX NUMBER: 160.96	CHANGE: +0.261	
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	8500	30600	3.600	3.600	3.600
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	1550	3938	2.500	2.550	2.550
INSURANCE SCTOR	10050	34538	INDEX NUMBER: 137.07	CHANGE: +0.232	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER /NEW	25643	40586	1.570	1.580	1.580
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER /NEW	104600	158710	1.490	1.510	1.510
JORDAN MINES MINERAL	800	1475	2.950	2.950	2.950
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	350	1760	4.840	4.970	4.970
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	2400	1510	3.100	3.100	3.100
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMBOURGE HOTELS	16000	39180	2.450	2.430	2.430
SERVICES SCTOR	173543	333411	INDEX NUMBER: 134.59	CHANGE: +0.732	
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	28831	87113	3.020	3.020	3.020
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	327	900	2.850	2.750	2.750
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	242	2295	9.580	9.460	9.460
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	31202	149870	4.730	4.770	4.770
THE JORDAN PIPE MANUFACTURING	1605	4341	2.720	2.700	2.700
ARAB CHEMICALS DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	88	1373	15.600	15.600	15.600
SPINNING & WEAVING INDUSTRIES	1500	3400	4.100	4.100	4.100
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	500	1415	2.830	2.830	2.830
DAR AL DAIA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3250	26525	8.120	8.150	8.150
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	6000	6028	1.020	1.000	1.000
LAJAR INDUSTRIAL POLYESTER	1050	7238	6.920	6.850	6.850
ARAB PAPER CONSTRUCTION & TRADING	21700	17489	.810	.800	.800
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2300	34608	1.100	1.100	1.100
JORDAN ROCKCONE INDUSTRIES	450	1110	2.520	2.470	2.470
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	200	280	1.420	1.400	1.400
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JISCO	50	205	4.100	4.100	4.100
JORDAN SULPHUR & WAX MANUFACTURING	4269	4269	.800	.780	.780
JORDAN SULPHUR & WAX MANUFACTURING	1400	6790	4.850	4.850	4.850
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	190	1511	1.000	1.000	1.000
KAWTHAR INVESTMENT	100	175	1.760	1.750	1.750
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1050	4470	4.290	4.250	4.250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	37350	80374	2.150	2.150	2.150
INDUSTRIAL SCTOR	169095	447505	INDEX NUMBER: 125.10	CHANGE: +0.572	
GRAND TOTAL	426128	131022	INDEX NUMBER: 144.26	CHANGE: +0.022	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	242582	299293			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	299293				

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WE

Tomba's perfect slalom season ends

FURANO, Japan (AP) — For the first seven slalom races of the season, nobody could beat Alberto Tomba.

In the eighth, it was a treacherous course setting that disarmed Tomba. "La Bomba," the Italian skier maintains. After a mistake up high, he skied off the course shortly before the finish in the first run of a World Cup race Sunday.

Michael Tritscher came from behind on the second run for his first World Cup victory in four years, and Austrian compatriot Mario Reiter shot into second place.

While Tomba's winning streak ended, he also continued a losing streak — he never has won in Japan in his decade as a World Cup racer. He gets another try Monday, in a giant slalom that was called off because of gusting winds on Saturday after Tomba had slipped into sixth place among the 23 who skied before the cancellation was decided.

An exuberant Tritscher, 29, said he had been having trouble putting two good runs together.

The victory, he said, "would be even better if Tomba had finished the race."

"Maybe next time," he added. "Why not?"

Tritscher and many others agreed with Tomba that the first-run course, set by German coach Sepp Hansen, challenged the skiers with extremely difficult turns.

Four of the first six skiers, including Tomba, didn't finish. In all, 16 of the 63 starters went out on the first run, and another three were disqualified.

But Tomba described the setting as "a course designed to defeat Tomba." It was impossible to get any rhythm, he said.

"After 10 races, they are able to defeat Tomba in the slalom with the course setting," he grumbled. Before Sunday, he had 10 victories in 12 races, with a 7-for-7 record in slaloms plus three giant slalom triumphs.

Tomba still holds a big lead in the overall World Cup standings, with 1,050 points.

Jure Kosir of Slovenia, fastest in the first run and hoping for 100 points for a vic-



Sweden's King Carl Gustav (2nd right) and Crown Princess Victoria (right) applaud the winner of the women's World Cup giant slalom event, Austrian Anita Wachter (left), before the podium ceremony Saturday. Wachter won the

slalom in 2 minutes, 1.87 seconds for the two runs, ahead of Swiss Vreni Schneider and third-placed Deborah Compagnoni (AFP photo).

Furseth was third in 1:48.83 and Kosir fourth in 1:48.99.

On the second run, Tritscher said, "I tried to attack, but I was careful too because the visibility was not so good. It was a tough racing day."

He said he felt his second run had been too stiff, "but it was OK."

Reiter said, "This is exactly what we racers needed most, to break the Tomba streak. Everybody was only talking about Tomba."

Having other names on the victory podium is "very important, although Tomba brings much good to the world of skiing," he added.

Tritscher dedicated his victory to Sweden's Thomas Fogdö, whose career was ended by a skiing accident Feb. 7. Fogdö had stood fourth in the World Cup slalom standings.

At a news conference, he said he spoke on behalf of all the slalom racers in describing Fogdö's absence as a great loss.

Norway's Ole Christian

tor, slipped back into fourth place and gained only 50, boosting his total to 620 points.

Five-time World Cup champion Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg stood third with 603 after picking up 40 points for a sixth-place finish.

But Girardelli and other all-rounders still have 11 races this season. Tomba, who skips the downhill and super giant slalom events, has only three. Kosir, another slalom specialist, said he might enter the remaining speed races to try to pick up points.

Tritscher, who had one second and two third places earlier in the season, went into Sunday's second run 15 seconds behind Kosir. But then he skied a 51.78 to Kosir's 52.98.

Tritscher finished with a total time of 1 minute, 47.94 seconds. Reiter, fastest on the second run in 51.41, had a 1:48.66 total.

Norway's Ole Christian

Furseth said, "I couldn't ski my own technique because right after every gate there was a big hole" left by the skis of earlier racers. He had started third in the first run but 15th in the second.

"I wanted to take a shorter line but I couldn't," he added.

Tomba, speaking through an interpreter, said, "I am tired. I don't understand why I am tired. Perhaps it's psychological" from the pressure.

"Perhaps I need a holi-

World Cup men's standings

Overall (after 23 races)

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2. Jure Kosir, Slovenia, 620.
3. Marc Girardelli, Luxembourg, 603.
4. Guenther Mader, Austria, 520.
5. Kjetil Andre Aamodt, Norway, 509.
6. Michael Tritscher, Austria, 477.
7. Michael Von Gruenigen, Switzerland, 476.
8. Luc Alphand, France, 469.
9. Harald Strand-Nilsen, Norway, 437.
10. Mario Reiter, Austria, 415.

day."

Matt Grosjean of Los Angeles was the only American finisher. He placed 26th in 1:55.67.

Grosjean said he had been stricken with the flu on Saturday, and he had wanted to ski aggressively Sunday, "but I didn't have the energy."

Chip Knight of New Canaan, Conn., and Erik Schiopley of Park City, Utah, did not finish the first run, and Paul Casey Puckett of Crested Butte, Colo., was disqualified.

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Auxerre's Moussa Saib (right) dueling for the ball with Bordeaux's Jean-Luc Dugan during their French first division match (AFP photo)

Everton storm into F.A. quarters

LONDON (Agencies) — Joe Royle's F.A. Cup expertise rubbed off on Everton as they stormed into the quarter-finals with an emphatic 5-0 victory over Norwich Saturday.

The Goodison Park manager, who had a history of giant killings during his spell with Oldham twice steering them into the semi-finals, watched his Premiership strugglers brush aside their opponents with ease.

Sweden's Anders Limpar began the goal-spree with a seventh minute strike and Joe Parkinson added his first ever goal for the club before half-time.

Paul Rideout, Duncan Ferguson and Graham Smart completed the rout as Everton, who have won the competition four times, cruised to a surprisingly comfortable victory.

After the biggest win of his tenure at Everton, Royle singled out Limpar for particular after the Swede scored his second goal for the Merseysiders following his excellent strike at West Ham on Monday.

Royle said: "I thought Anders was terrific. We all know what he can do but he's a bit of a nervous lad for all that he's done in his career, including his time in Italy.

Royle also admitted that it would be difficult not to give the Swedish international a permanent place in the first-team, adding:

"You could see what immense ability he has and when he turns in a performance like that you have to find a place for him."

Tottenham, aiming for their third quarter-final place in the last five seasons, grabbed a 21st minute lead against Southampton through German star Jurgen Klinsmann's 20th goal of the season.

But their joy lasted just a

minute before Jeff Kenna was fouled and England international Mathew Le Tissier, who has only missed one penalty in his career, converted from the spot to earn Saints a replay chance at the Dell.

Le Tissier's penalty was supplemented by several moments of sublime skill and his manager Alan Ball could offer nothing but praise for his England midfielder, saying: "Nothing he does ever surprises me. He comes up with something wonderful every day."

Even Spur boss Gerry Francis was forced to concede: "Nobody can fail to admire his skills and since Alan has been in charge he's a found a higher consistency level."

Another dramatic penalty decided the other fifth round tie in London with Clive Wilson converting QPR's stoppage-time spot-kick to wreck first division Millwall's hopes of a quarter-final place at Loftus Road.

QPR manager Ray Wilkins praised both sets of supporters for their behaviour after the match was tipped as a potential trouble spot following the problems after Millwall's fourth round replay against Chelsea.

The eyes of the football world have been on English soccer supporters following Wednesday's disgraceful scenes in Dublin, which forced the abandonment of England's friendly international against the Republic of Ireland.

But the match passed off without violence and Wilkins said: "The most pleasing thing about the afternoon was the fact that both sets of supporters conducted themselves to high standard."

Republic of Ireland international David Kelly, whose goal sparked the riots in Wednesday's Dublin friendly

France's top marksman Patrice Loko scored his 18th goal of the season as league leaders Nantes continued their brilliant form to beat Martigues 3-0 at home on Saturday.

Loko struck the first of Nantes' goals in the 24th minute and played a major role in another as the club equalled Paris SG's record of 26 unbeaten matches from the start of a league season.

Nantes will equal the overall all French record for consecutive matches without loss if they win or draw their next match.

PSG remained unbeaten for 27 matches in the middle of the 1992-93 season.

Saturday's win, in a match postponed from last week because of rain, put Nantes 11 points clear of second-placed Lyon and champions Paris SG.

Pierce, Graf in Paris final

PARIS (AFP) — Mary Pierce gave disgruntled French sports fans something to cheer Saturday by sweeping into a title showdown with Steffi Graf at the \$460,000 Indoor Open Gaz de France.

Unhappy French rugby supporters, trooping silently out of the Parc des Princes just a few hundred yards away after Scotland's historic victory in the Five Nations international, were puzzled to hear cheering coming from inside the 4,500-capacity Courtier Stadium.

The noise was being generated by hundreds of young Mary Pierce fans watching their idol finish off Croatian teenager Iva Majoli 6-3, 6-4 in the second singles semi-final at the \$460,000 event.

The Canadian-born Pierce, who had come so close to being eliminated before recovering in her first match when she trailed Australian qualifier Renata Stubbs 1-5 in the third set, moved one step away from her first-ever tournament victory at the adopted France.

Majoli, normally so steady

from the baseline, could not match the sheer power of the recently crowned Australian Open champion and there was little she could do to prevent the 20-year-old Pierce lining up a sixth career meeting with Graf.

The German, playing her first tournament after a three-month injury lay-off, showed no discomfort from the back problem she must nurse for the rest of her career and she surged past her old rival Jana Novotna 6-3, 6-2 for her 22nd win in their 25 encounters.

"I was an excellent match, despite that scoreline," said Novotna, adding: "But everything goes so fast when Steffi is on court. You have to try to slow her down."

"I think she's just as good as I have ever seen her."

Graf, who revealed earlier this week that she had decided no to operate on a bone-growth in her lower back because it would mean nearly a year out of tennis without any certainty of success, said: "Obviously I'm extremely happy to be in the final. It makes up for all the bad times recently."

Watched by her parents Peter and Heidi Graf and Swiss coach Heinz Gumbrecht, the five-time Wimbledon champion was still not one hundred per cent satisfied.

"Physically I still need a couple of weeks of good training," she said, "but obviously I'm really pleased with the way things are going."

Graf has a special score to

settle with Pierce who beat her at both the French Open and Virginia Slims Championships last year.

"I know what to expect against Mary," she said.

Graf will also be particularly

motivated on Sunday since, if she wins in Paris, she will recapture the world number-one ranking from Spain's Arantxa Sanchez.

Sanchez took over the number-one spot last week.

Pierce, who has been playing doubles with Novotna all week to improve her serve and volley, said: "I've got nothing to prove. I'm just glad Steffi's back."

"I feel fine physically and the crowd support here has been marvelous. I think I can win on Sunday. I can only do my best."

Becker, Kafelnikov in Milan final

Big serving Boris Becker meets surprise finalist Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the \$680,000 Mutati Time Indoor event here.

Top seed Becker defeated sixth seeded Petr Korda from the Czech Republic 7-6 (7-3), 6-2, in two hours, 38 minutes, and Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov ousted second seeded Croatian Goran Ivanisevic 7-5, 6-7 (4-7), 6-4.

Korda said the German's big serve was the winning difference. "Becker served tremendously, that was the key to the match," he said. "I had five break point chances in the first set, but I hit the tape or had bad luck on all of them."

Becker's match win was his 27th in Milan, an event where he has taken the title four times. The victory moves the 27-year-old German one ahead of American John McEnroe, another four-time holder here.

It was McEnroe who handed Becker the first of only two losses at the tournament, beating him in the first round in 1985. Becker's debut here. Becker won the Marseille stop on the ATP Tour last week, his first tournament since a surprise first-round defeat by Patrick McEnroe at the Australian Open.

The German has never lost to Korda, and improved his career record to 5-0. The match was a replay of last year's final, which Becker won.

Kafelnikov, celebrating his 21st birthday Saturday night,



French Mary Pierce returns the ball to Croatian Iva Majoli on Feb. 13 during their semi-final match at the Paris Indoor Open.

Pierce won 6-3, 6-4, to play German Steffi Graf for the title on Sunday (AFP photo)

gave himself the best possible present with his win over Ivanisevic.

The number five seed, who capped a fast rise from outside the top 100 to the edge of the top 10 last year, crushed the 23-year-old Croatian's hopes of getting into his first ATP tour final since the Stockholm Open in early November.

Kafelnikov broke into the top 10 on January 30 and showed by his victory at the Forum that he is determined to hang on to his place in the elite group.

The Russian from the Black Sea resort of Sochi reached his last career final the week before the U.S. Open at Long Island, where he defeated Frenchman Cedric Pioline.

Martin beats Sampras

Two match points away from victory Saturday, Pete Sampras tightened up.

The world's No. 1 player won his first set 6-4 against Todd Martin in the St. Jude Indoor tournament semifinals. But Sampras missed two match points and Martin pulled out a 4-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 victory.

Martin will play Paul Haarhuis, who beat unseeded Jonathan Stark 6-4, 7-5 Saturday night, in the finals.

"It's like a bad dream," said Sampras, who said he couldn't remember the last time he lost when he had match point. In fact, it happened last May when he didn't convert a match point before losing to Michael Stich in Germany.

Sampras served for the match at 5-4 only to be broken by Martin, his friend and

practice partner who's ranked No. 10. The set went to a tiebreaker, and Sampras jumped ahead 5-1.

No matter what he tried, Sampras couldn't put Martin away. Martin pulled out 8-6 for the second set victory and broke Sampras in the first game of the final set before winning.

"Basically the pressure was on me, and at that point he had nothing to lose," Sampras said. "He missed quite a bit, but he made the right points."

Agassi-Sampras eye indoor showdown

World number one Pete Sampras and fast-charging number two fellow American Andre Agassi could meet for the first time since their Australian Open final here next Sunday in the U.S. Indoor final.

The \$714,250 ATP event features 32 players, including world number five Michael Chang and Australians Pat Rafter and Mark Woodforde. But the main attraction is a possible Sampras-Agassi duel.

Sampras, a two-time Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion, lost to Todd Martin in the semi-finals of a tuneup Saturday in Memphis. But he thrives in this city, where he made his pro debut at age 16 and won his first pro title in 1990.

Sampras has faced tough times off the court even as Agassi has challenged him for the top ranking. Sampras friend and coach Tim Gulick-

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Russia dashes hope of ceasefire with Chechens

MOZDOK, Russia (Agencies) — Russia's military commander in Chechnya on Sunday effectively dealt a death blow to talks with secessionist rebels, saying he would not extend a ceasefire which expired at 6 p.m. local time (1500 GMT).

General Anatoly Kulikov released a statement at military headquarters in the town of Mozdok saying it was pointless holding further ceasefire talks after rebels had attacked Russian troops on Saturday.

"The united military command has exhausted all the chances it had to stop the fighting and is now obliged to take adequate measures," said the statement.

Russian and Chechen military officials on Wednesday agreed on a ceasefire, later extended to Sunday. The two sides accused each other of violating the truce but nevertheless had been expected to meet on Sunday to discuss extending the deal.

"For a week we stood on the threshold of peace, sincerely believed in this chance and did all we could to achieve it," said Mr. Kulikov.

Russia drove rebel forces out of Grozny in early February after more than two months of heavy fighting that destroyed the city and now would seem to have little choice but to push for the complete capitulation of their opponents.

Gen. Kulikov blamed a small circle around rebel

leader Dzhokhar Dudayev "ready to destroy thousands of people and buildings to further their political ambitions" for trying to break into Grozny on Saturday night.

The Russian government press service said 80 rebels were killed when a group of fighters used mortars, grenade launchers and small arms when they tried to move into the city from the west, near a big oil refinery.

"The fighting lasted from 1530 (1230 GMT) to 2100 (1800 GMT). Dudayev's unit was blockaded and destroyed," the press service said in a statement.

It said Russian positions near the village of Chechna, near the southern suburbs of Grozny, had also been shelled.

The headquarters of the Chechen insurgents, according to Interfax news agency, admitted the attack but said only two men had been wounded. The Chechen assault started at least 10 fires at the refinery.

In Washington, administration officials said Saturday it was unlikely President Bill Clinton would agree to a May summit in Moscow in light of the bloody Russian campaign against Chechnya's self-declared independence.

President Boris Yeltsin wanted Mr. Clinton to attend a 50th anniversary celebration May 8 of the Allies' victory over Germany in World War II.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher said earlier it

was unlikely Mr. Clinton would attend, adding that "clearly, Chechnya was a factor" in the deliberation.

A busload of Chechen prisoners of war headed for Grozny Saturday for a prisoner exchange with the Russians, but ITAR-TASS said Sunday the exchange did not take place. The bus had not yet returned to Nazran, the agency said.

However, the two sides did exchange the bodies of war dead, Moscow's NTV news said, without giving any details. The prisoner and corpse exchanges were part of the ceasefire agreement.

Although tenuous, the brief truce allowed the Red Cross on Saturday to get its first convoy of aid to Grozny, a wasteland of rubble without heat, electricity, clean water.

Many of the city's 400,000 residents have fled since the Russians first tried to storm the city on Dec. 31. After the failed ground assault, the Russians changed tactics, attacking from a distance with heavy artillery, warplanes and missiles.

Thousands of civilians are believed to have died in the merciless pounding, as well as in Russian attacks elsewhere in Chechnya.

Russia's human rights commission told Interfax that he believes 25,000 Chechen civilians may have been killed since the war began on Dec. 11. Sergei Kovalyov spoke with Interfax on arrival from a meeting in Geneva with U.N. human rights officials.



CROSSING: An Israeli soldier checks the permits of the Palestinian workers at Erez crossing on the border with the Gaza Strip on Sunday. A Palestinian teenager was shot dead by an Israeli soldier Sunday morning when he allegedly tried to cross the border without a permit. Nearly 900

Gazans returned to work in Israel Sunday after being individually checked for explosives as the army eased a month-long closure of the territories following a suicide bombing in Beit Lid Jan. 22 (AFP photo)

3 PSD officers retired; top positions reshuffled

AMMAN (Petra) — The government on Sunday reshuffled senior positions at the Public Security Department (PSD), retiring three senior officers as of March 1.

A statement issued Sunday

said a Cabinet meeting on

Saturday decided to retire

Major General Muayyad

Mubasat, (PSD) assistant

director for traffic affairs,

Maj.-Gen. Mahmoud Abu

Hammour, assistant for man-

power affairs, and Maj.-Gen.

Hashem Al Qaisi, the PSD's

inspector general.

PSD Director General

Lieutenant General Abdul

Rahman Al Adwan Sunday

decided to make the follow-

ing appointments and trans-

fers:

Maj.-Gen. Mohammad

Terzi will assume office as

PSD inspector general, suc-

ceeding Maj.-Gen. Qaisi.

Mahmoud Hadid will become

acting director of the PSD's

Preventive Security Office.

Colonel Adnan Al Abdallat

will become head of the Zar-

qa police department, and

Col. Ahmad Al Ghamarat

will become director of the

Royal Police Academy.

Brigadier Abdulla

Hababeh will be transferred from the Amman police department to the PSD director's office to serve as assistant for judicial affairs.

Brig. Ibrahim Saraireh will be transferred from the Royal Police Academy to be become assistant PSD director for traffic affairs, succeeding Maj.-Gen. Mubasat.

Brig. Ghaleb Zoubi will be transferred from the PSD's personnel affairs department to become assistant PSD director for manpower.

Brig. Abdul Karim Al

Tarawneh will be transferred from the Balqa police department to become head of the PSD department responsible for officers affairs.

Brig. Adel Arnouti will be transferred from the Preventive Security Office to head the Amman police department.

Brig. Abdul Qader Al

Ouran will be transferred

from the Zarqa police depart-

ment to become head of the

Zarqa police department, and

Abdul Razzaq Al Rakkad

will be transferred from the Amman department to be

become deputy director of the

Zarqa department.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Go back to Tunis, envoy tells Arafat

CAIRO (AFP) — Yasser Arafat should leave the Gaza Strip and go back to his former Tunis headquarters to put pressure on Israel to implement autonomy agreements, a Palestinian envoy here said Sunday. Mohammad Sobeh, Palestinian delegate to the Arab League, said: "Arafat must consider going back to Tunis following Israel's refusal to implement the accord it signed on autonomy. He can't continue to stay in Gaza in this situation where nothing is clear in Israel's position. What is he doing there? By leaving he will put pressure on Israel." Mr. Sobeh added: "This decision can't be a personal one and must be taken by PLO authorities."

Israel to hold naval exercise with Arabs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli navy will for the first time stage manoeuvres with several Arab fleets off Tunisia in March, the defence ministry said Sunday. Ships from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia will take part with Israeli vessels, spokesman Oded Ben Ami said. The exercise was agreed at multilateral talks on arms control and regional security, part of the Middle East peace process.

Iran holds mass funeral for 3,000 soldiers

TEHRAN (AFP) — A mass funeral was held Sunday for 3,000 Iranian soldiers and militiamen killed in the 1980-88 war with Iraq whose remains have only recently been found. All the country's top leaders as well as military officials took part in the ceremony held in front of the parliament building in central Tehran and attended by thousands of people.

Court acquits Kuwaiti lawmaker of fornication

KUWAIT (AP) — The criminal court has acquitted a parliament member of "committing a scandalous act" with a woman in a parked car and assaulting a policeman, his attorney disclosed Sunday. At the request of the defendant, Ahmad Nassar Al Shraieq, lawmakers voted last year to lift his immunity for a trial, the first of its kind since parliament was established in 1963. Parliament members have accused the government of fabricating the incident to discredit the house. "The court was not convinced of the policeman's story and found it contradictory," said defence lawyer Imad Al Seif. The ruling was announced Saturday.

Wife-beating threatens Israeli envoy's post

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The appointment of an Arab-Israeli mayor as ambassador to Finland was called into question Sunday after he admitted hitting his wife. "I slap my wife from time to time. So what," Rafik Haji Yihye told the Haaretz newspaper. The Labour Party stalwart and mayor of the Arab-Israeli town of Taibe has been pre-selected for Helsinki by a foreign ministry committee. He would become the first Arab with Israeli citizenship appointed as an Israeli ambassador. Labour Minister Ora Namir called Sunday for him to be barred. "A man who beats his wife cannot claim to represent the state of Israel in Helsinki or elsewhere," she told the army radio station. Ms. Namir appealed to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to find another candidate from the Arab-Israeli community "whose behaviour is more in line with our morals." Mr. Yihye also told the daily on Friday that he opposed the opening of a shelter for battered wives in his town. "A shelter would expose women to harmful influences," he said.

"I think it is a reasonable

Jordan is still awaiting Israeli envoy nomination

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian government has not received any official Israeli nomination of an ambassador to the Kingdom and will act upon the issue as and when Israel formally sends a notification to the Foreign Ministry, a senior official said Sunday.

The vacancies that remained in limbo pending the decision on Jordan covered Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Finland, India, Ethiopia and Mexico, according to the Post.

In the meantime, Marwan Muasher, who is expected to take office as Jordan's first ambassador to Israel, is expected to head for Tel Aviv next month after some "technical and procedural issues" are settled, officials said.

They noted that Dr. Muasher, who served as head of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington, D.C., and later as spokesman for the Kingdom's peace negotiating team, had to be sworn in as ambassador in the presence of His Majesty King Hussein.

A Royal Decree has already been issued approving Dr. Muasher's appointment as ambassador.

Officials said meanwhile that the foreign ministry had not received any official information from the government of Saudi Arabia naming an ambassador to Amman and filling the four-year-old vacant post at the Saudi embassy in Amman.

A local report said last week that the Riyadh government had decided to nominate Abdullah Sudeiri, a relative of King Fahd, as its ambassador to Jordan. The report came after Hani Khalifeh took up office in Riyadh as Jordan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia last month.

Riyadh called its ambassador from Jordan and reduced the Jordanian diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf crisis.

Relations have improved since then, and the Saudi acceptance of Mr. Khalifeh as Jordan's ambassador to Riyadh to replace Nasser Batayneh after more than three years was seen as a positive signal to the improvement of ties.

The Jerusalem Post reported last week that the tussle over an ambassador to Jordan was holding up the eight nominations. "Unless we know who will be ambassador to Jordan, we cannot proceed on other appointments. If a person does not

have a clear mandate, he can't be appointed," the Post said.

The statement also cleared the way for the Israeli foreign ministry to nominate eight other ambassadors to Saudi Arabia last month.

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